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A LETTER

-- OF --

ANDREW DICKSON WHITE, LL. D.

RESIGNING THE PRESIDENCY OF CORNELL UNIVERSITY AND THE
PROFESSORSHIP OF HISTORY,

-- WITH --

RESOLUTIONS OF THE TRUSTEES, FACULTY AND
ALUMNI OF SAID UNIVERSITY.

JUNE 17TH, 1885.

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LETTER OF RESIGNATION.

To the Board of Trustees of Cornell University.

GENTLEMEN :

The present meeting completes twenty years since, with our dear and venerated friend, Ezra Cornell, I took part in securing the charter of the University, submitted its plan of organization, and entered this honorable Board. And now, in accordance with a purpose long since formed, I hereby present my resignation as President and Professor of History.

In doing so allow me to thank you for the steady and hearty support you have given me during all these years, and to say that the labors and cares necessarily attendant upon such a formative period have been more than compensated by the kindness of Trustees, Faculty, Alumni, and Students.

The University is at last in such condition that its future may well be considered secure. Thanks to your wise administration its endowment has been developed beyond our expectations, its debt extinguished, its equipment made ample, its Faculty increased until it is one of the largest and most effective in our country, and an undergraduate body brought together which by its numbers and spirit promises all that we can ask of the future.

But whatever pride we may take in the growth of the institution under our care, we have a far greater cause for satisfaction in the triumph here and elsewhere of those principles in which our University was founded and which, in some respects, it was the first to represent. Among the facts resulting from these principles may be named the consolidation of resources for higher education ; a closer union between the advanced and the general edu-

cational system of the State; unsectarian control; the equal eligibility of all candidates for trusteeships and professorships, irrespective of sectarian or partisan connections; the presentation of various courses of study, each carefully framed to give a discipline and culture suited to the different characters, needs, and aims of various classes of students; the placing of all students in all courses on an equal footing as regards privileges; the development, especially, of a well planned course in History and Political and Social Science adapted to the practical needs of men worthily ambitious in public affairs; the more thorough presentation of the leading modern literatures, especially that of our own tongue; full attention to technical studies both on the scientific and practical side; and, in general, the steady effort to abolish monastic government and pedantic instruction. All these ideas and tendencies of which our University has been a leading champion and for which it incurred in its early days much opposition and some obloquy, have now so far taken hold upon the leading American universities that their speedy and complete triumph is certain.

At two different periods when about to leave the country for a time I have placed my resignation in your hands, and you have not thought best to accept it. I now contemplate another absence from the country in obedience to what seems to me a duty, and must respectfully insist that my resignation be now finally accepted.

Although I have but reached what is generally known as the middle period of life, it seems my right, in view of the facts already stated, to ask that the duties hitherto laid upon me be now transferred to another and that I be left free to take measures for the restoration of my health and strength and to carry out certain other plans of work to which I have for several years looked forward with longing, in the hope that they can be made eventually useful to the University and possibly to the public at large.

In thus taking leave of an institution which has become very dear to me, permit me to suggest that there are many reasons why the Board should provide for the election of my successor at the

earliest moment consistent with a proper choice. Whoever he may be, may I not also ask for him the same hearty support that has been extended to me?

With renewed thanks for these years of coöperation and support and for the personal friendship which has been extended to me in such full measure,

I remain,

Very respectfully and truly yours,

ANDREW D. WHITE.

CORNELL UNIVERSITY,
June 17th, 1885.

RESOLUTIONS.

THE TRUSTEES.

At a meeting of the Board of Trustees of Cornell University held at Ithaca, June 17, 1885, the following memorandum and resolutions were unanimously adopted :

The resignation by Andrew D. White of the Presidency of Cornell University becomes an era in its history. For twenty years he had devoted his best exertions, energy and industry, his large intellect and loyal zeal to the organization and growth of this institution. Hand in hand with its benefactor and founder, the project once conceived was pressed to a successful execution. Their dreams have been realized and their efforts crowned with noble and generous results.

How great the cares, anxieties and labors of Mr. White during those twenty years few, if any, can realize. How large and generous his benefactions, equally bestowed on the University and its students, few will ever know. How bountifully he has created for us friends by his personal and social character, how great has been his influence in our behalf, has become a part of our history.

During these twenty years the respect and affection of all connected with the University towards him have grown and strengthened. The purity of his character, blamelessness of his life, his noble ambition, his generous and self-sacrificing devotion to the cause of education, his wisdom and kindness of heart, have made his name and his presence very near and dear to all his associates.

It is a matter for congratulation that during this long period of time the utmost confidence has been extended to him by the Trustees as a body and the members as individuals. He has always had their generous support, his services have been by them highly appreciated, and mutual respect and esteem have always existed between the President and its members.

The Trustees, in common with the public, deeply regret the personal considerations which have made this resignation, as Mr. White believes, a matter of duty to himself. But it will always be a pleasant thought that regrets for such necessity are mutual, and that no unkind remembrances will accompany or follow the act.

Let us hope that in the near future, after a period of needed change and rest, our honored friend may renew his relations to the University, in a more congenial and less exacting position, and give to us the prestige of his high character and attainments.

Let us also hope that his successor may be able to follow in the path marked out by him and magnify the work so wisely begun and continued during the whole of his administration. Therefore, be it

Resolved, that in consenting to accept President White's resignation, the Board not only sincerely regret the causes which prompt his separation from the chief office of the University as its intellectual teacher, adviser and friend, but that they trust and believe that his interest in its welfare will continue for all time to come.

Resolved, that with this end in view we desire that he shall accept the nomination of the Board to act as honorary President of the University.

Resolved, that for the reasons set forth in his letter to the Board of Trustees, that the resignation of President White be accepted,

the resignation not to take effect until the commencement of the next university year, in September, 1885.

Resolved, that the Legislature of this State be and is hereby requested to amend the charter of Cornell University so as to make Andrew D. White, the first President of the University, a member of the Board of Trustees for life.

Resolved, that the retiring President of the University be requested to sit for a portrait to be placed in one of the buildings of the University, and that the Executive Committee are hereby instructed to make suitable provision for this purpose.

THE FACULTY.

At a special meeting of the Faculty of Cornell University convened on Wednesday afternoon, June 17, the following minute was, by unanimous vote, placed on record :

We have read with deep emotion the letter of this date, in which President White resigns his positions as President and Professor of History in this University. While we can but admit the justice of his claim to be released from the heavy labors borne by him in these offices for nearly twenty years, it is impossible for us without to think of the sundering of a relation which has lasted since the earliest existence of the University, and which has been essential to the official life of every one of its members. We have obtained with great wisdom and great labor, with the most untiring enthusiasm, with constant self-sacrifice, and with unflinching fidelity for the sound growth and welfare of the University. We wish to express to him our sense of the large and farseeing spirit which, in association with Ezra Cornell, he laid the foundations of the University ; of the energy, sagacity and success with which, surviving his venerated associate, he has since wrought in building up the University to its present prosperity ; of the generous attitude which he has maintained toward the Faculty in all matters of administration ; and of the strong and inspiring influence which he

has exerted upon the body of undergraduates and alumni. It would be a source of profound gratification to us if, while relieving himself of executive work, he would still consent to remain with us as a part of the teaching body of the University, giving to us in our deliberations the benefit of his ripe experience, and to future classes of our students the same instruction and stimulation in historical work which have been enjoyed by all classes that have thus far been graduated from the University. In any event, we beg him to be assured that in retiring from the presidency, he bears with him not only our respect and gratitude, but our best wishes and our warm personal regard.

THE ALUMNI.

At the annual meeting of the Alumni, held at Ithaca on June 17th, 1885, the following resolutions were adopted by a unanimous and rising vote :

Whereas, it has been known to the associate alumni of Cornell University now assembled in annual session, that it has seemed to our beloved President, Andrew D. White, to resign his high office, compelled thereto by imperative need of rest and watchfulness for his health ;

And whereas, the Alumni Association, while deeply regretting the loss of his services, and the expression and the inability of the Association to do otherwise, do hereby express our deep regret and sympathy that such a step has been found necessary. There being, however, with our sadness at his resignation, a thought of congratulation to him and to ourselves when we bring to mind the rounded completeness of twenty years of unselfish devotion to our University whose success and proud position are so largely owing to his jealous care and wise counselings. We would further express our joy that his valued counsel will yet remain to us and would all unite in the prayer that many years of usefulness may be vouchsafed to him.

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